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Jacobson, et al.

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REGISTER FILE FOR PROCESSORS

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Honorable Assistant Commissioner
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Sir:

Enclosed for filing please find the patent application for an invention entitled,
"EXPLICIT HIERARCHICAL REGISTER FILE FOR PROCESSORS", filed on behalf
of Sun Microsystems, Inc., assignee from inventors Quinn A. Jacobson and Chiao-Mei
Chuang, including 20 pages of specification, 4 pages of claims, 6 sheets of drawing
figures, and 1 page of Abstract. Also enclosed herewith are the Recordation Cover
Sheet, Assignment and Declaration.

The attorney's Docket Number is SUN-P4914.

Kindly address all communications regarding this application to:

This application is submitted in the name of inventors Quinn A. Jacobson and Chiao-Mei Chuang, assignors to Sun Microsystems, Inc.

5

SPECIFICATION

EXPLICIT HIERARCHICAL REGISTER FILE FOR PROCESSORS

10

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

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This invention pertains generally to processor architecture, focussing on the register files used by execution units. More particularly this invention is directed to an improved processor using a hierarchical register file architecture, where the hierarchical register files are visible at the macro-architecture level, facilitating improved performance and backwards compatibility in a processor instruction set.

20

2. The Prior Art

As reliance on computer systems has increased so have demands on system
5 performance. This has been particularly noticeable in the past decade as both
businesses and individual users have demanded far more than the simple character
cell output on dumb terminals driven by simple, non-graphical applications
typically used in the past. Coupled with more sophisticated applications and
internet use, the demands on the system and in particular the main processor are
10 increasing at a very high rate.

As is well known in the art a processor is used in a computer system, where
the computer system as a whole is of conventional design using well known
components. An example of a typical computer system is the Sun Microsystems
15 Ultra 10 Model 333 Workstation running the Solaris v.7 operating system.
Technical details of the example system may be found on Sun Microsystems'
website.

A typical processor is shown in block diagram form in FIG. 1. Processor
20 100 contains a Prefetch And Dispatch Unit 122 which fetches and decodes
instructions from main memory (not shown) through Memory Management Unit
110, Memory Interface Unit 118, and System Interconnect 120. In some cases, the

instructions or their operands may be in non-local cache in which case Prefetch
 And Dispatch Unit 122 uses External Cache Unit 114 to access external cache
 RAM 116. Instructions that are decoded and waiting for execution may be stored
 in Instruction Cache And Buffer 124. Prefetch And Dispatch Unit 122 detects
 5 which type of instruction it has, and sends integer instructions to Integer Execution
 Unit 126 and floating point instructions to Floating Point Execution Unit 128. The
 instructions sent by Prefetch And Dispatch Unit 122 contain register addresses,
 typically two read locations and one write location, where the read locations are
 the values to be operated on and the write location is where the result will be
 10 stored.

FIG. 1 has one integer and one floating point execution unit. To improve
 performance parallel execution units were added. One parallel execution unit
 implementation is shown in FIG. 2. To avoid the confusion and surplus verbiage
 15 caused by the inclusion of non-relevant portions of the processor, FIG. 2 and the
 drawings following it show only the relevant portions of a processor. As will be
 appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art, the portion of a processor shown is
 functionally integrated into the rest of a processor.

20 A register file, Integer Register File 200, is shown connected to Integer
 Execution Units 208 and 210 through Bypass Circuit 204. There may be any
 practicable number of additional integer execution units between Integer

Execution Units 208 and 210. Another register file, Floating Point Register File 202, is shown connected to Floating Point Execution Units 212 and 214 through Bypass Circuit 206. As with the integer execution units, there may be any practicable number of additional floating point execution units between Floating

5 Point Execution Units 212 and 214.

Bypass circuits are needed because it can be the case that one execution unit is attempting to both read a value and write a result to a particular register, or one execution unit may be reading a register in its corresponding register file

10 while another is trying to write to the same register. Depending on the exact timing of the signals as they arrive over the data lines from one or both execution units, this can lead to indeterminate results. Bypass Circuits 204 and 206 detect this condition and arbitrate access. The correct value is sent to the execution unit executing a read, and the correct new value into is written into the register.

15 The circuitry needed to do this is complex for more than one execution unit, being dependant on the number of register ports attached to one register file. Generally, the complexity of the bypass circuitry rises as the square of the number of register ports a register file has; for n register ports on a register file the

20 complexity of the bypass circuitry rises as n^2 .

In addition to the complexity associated with the number of attached execution units and bypass circuitry, a primary bottleneck on the size of register files is the number of ports that must be made available to read and write the registers. The complexity associated with the number of ports is proportional to the square of the total number of ports on a register file. Since there are typically two read operations for every write operation (i.e., most instructions read two values from a register file and write a resulting value), register files typically have two read ports for every write port. If a register file has 8 read ports and 4 write ports, its relative order of complexity would be on the order of $(8 + 4)^2 = 144$ with 12 ports, when compared to other register files with other numbers of ports. Using the same register file and trying to increase its throughput by increasing the number of ports, as an example increasing the number of read ports by 4 and the number of write ports by 2, yields a relative order of complexity of $(12 + 6)^2 = 324$ with 18 ports. As an alternative, adding a duplicate of the original register file yields a relative order of complexity of $(8 + 4)^2 + (8 + 4)^2 = 244$ with 24 ports. Thus, using more register files with fewer ports per register file adds less complexity with more ports (for more throughput) than trying to increase the number of ports on a single register file.

In addition to the complexity just discussed, there are other considerations that limit the size of register files. One problem is physically adding more address and data lines, and the extra length and longer propagation times associated with

the extra length. This is a concern since a register file is usually doubled in size with each increase. The accompanying increase in the number of address and data lines, and the increase in individual lengths and associated propagation delays, run directly counter to the need to increase clock speeds in the processor.

5

Another problem is addressing the individual registers. To address each of 32 registers in a typical register file requires 5 bits. An example of this addressing may be found in Sun Microsystems UltraSPARC II processor, technical details being available on Sun's website. Each instruction typically has addresses for two values to be read and operated on, and one address to write the resulting value into. Thus, for register files having 32 registers, a total of 15 bits (5 per address) must be allocated per instruction out of a limited number of bits available in each instruction. To add larger register files, for example to make the register files in an UltraSPARC II processor 64 registers long instead of 32 registers, requires that additional bits in each instruction be permanently allocated for addressing. In the case of registers with 64 registers, an additional address bit per address field is needed over register files with 32 registers, for a total of 3 additional bits per instruction. This is a real problem when improvements are being made to an existing architecture. Typically, each word in the existing instruction set is full (all the bits are in use), so no more bits can be allocated to addressing. Even if some instructions have unused bits, it must be the case that the extra address bits be available in all instructions. If they aren't, this causes other problems such as

adding considerable complexity and lack of backward compatibility into microcode.

For the reasons just discussed, adding register file space by increasing the
5 size of the register file is not practical.

In spite of the problems just discussed, the increased parallelism achieved by connecting multiple execution units to one register file has added pressure to increase the number of registers available. Each execution unit may wish to use
10 anywhere from one or more depending on the instructions and operands it is using. This leads to a contention for register space between the execution units, and limits the number that can be connected before there are diminishing returns due to the lack of registers available.

15 Thus, there are restrictions that necessitate keeping register files at their current size, yet there is a tremendous need for more locally available registers as well.

It is therefore a goal of this invention is to provide a method and system for
20 increasing the throughput of execution units connected to register files by increasing the amount of locally available registers. The goals of increasing the

number of locally available registers in the present invention must be achieved without increasing the size of the register files currently in use.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

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A device and method to increase the throughput of a processor, specifically increasing the throughput of execution units, is disclosed herein. A new architectural feature is added called a backing register file which is directly coupled with the register files, the register files being attached to the execution
10 units in a processor. The backing register file is explicitly visible to users and may be controlled by users. Using the Backing Register File allows users to move values between it and any of the processor's register files, providing a larger register file from which values can be loaded or stored and be ready for immediate use. The Backing Register File may also be used to fetch values from main
15 memory before an execution unit needs them, potentially saving considerable time (preventing stall).

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING FIGURES

20

Figure 1 is a block diagram of a prior art processor.

Figure 2 is a block diagram showing parallelism implemented in a prior art processor.

Figure 3 is a block diagram showing a backing register file according to the present invention.

Figure 4 is a flowchart example of initializing the present invention.

Figure 5 is a flowchart showing use of the backing register file of the present invention.

Figure 6a is a data structure that may be used with the present invention.

Figure 6b is a data structure that also may be used with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Person of ordinary skill in the art will realize that the following description of the present invention is illustrative only and not in any way limiting. Other embodiments of the invention will readily suggest themselves to such skilled persons having the benefit of this disclosure.

When viewing the figures, it is intended that similar designations used in this disclosure are intended to designate substantially similar matter.

Referring now to FIG. 3, Register Files 308 and 310, and Bypass Circuits 312 and 314 are shown. They perform similar functions as Register Files 200 and 202, and Bypass Circuits 204 and 206. However, due to the extra connections of

Backing Register File 300 the design and implementation will need to be different than the prior art. Integer Execution Units 208 and 210 are shown, potentially having a number of addition integer execution units between them, and Floating Point Execution Units 212 and 214 are also shown and also may have a number of additional floating point execution units between them.

Backing Register File 300 is added to create more local register storage, while not increasing the size of existing Register Files 308 and 310 as compared to Register Files 200 and 202 in FIG. 2. Connection 302 is a full set of address and data lines, allowing Backing Register File 300 the ability to address and access individual registers in each of the Register Files 308 and 310. It will also be the case that the same connectivity will be present between Backing Register File 300 and any register files implemented in a particular processor.

Backing Register File 300 may also be connected to Main Memory 306 through Connection 304. As will be readily understood by those of ordinary skill in the art and with the benefit of the present disclosure, Main Memory 306 is not located on the processor chip and Connection 304 is comprised of a series of connections and interfaces both on and off the chip as more fully described in FIG. 1, with Main Memory 306 being of conventional and well known design. It is expected that cost conscious implementations will not implement a connection between Main Memory 306 and Backing Register File 300, while implementations

where performance has precedence over cost may make use of the extra speed available by having a more direct connection between Backing Register File 300 and Main Memory 306.

5 Backing Register File 300, being connected to both Register Files 308 and 310, may be used to hold, store, prefetch, and temporarily buffer values in a way that will compliment the number of registers available locally to both the integer execution units and the floating point execution units. This will be particularly useful in holding values that are going to be used again in the instruction stream.

10 By temporarily holding register values that would have been written to main memory considerable time is saved. Another saving occurs when a set of instructions needs to operate on a series of operands but when loading all the operands would preclude other execution units from allocating the space they need for normal execution. It is expected that under normal use, a significant portion

15 (well over half) of the instructions executed by the execution units will not need to make use of Backing Register File 300. Those that do will use Backing Register File 300 as just described, such as for temporary storage instead of using main memory, or to prefetch or preload values into Backing Register File 300 in preparation for execution.

20

As mentioned above, Backing Register File 300 is especially useful when values would ordinarily have been transferred between execution units and main

memory. Communicating with main memory is long process (many processor clock cycles), which could cause a stall state in one or more execution units as the values are read or written between Register Files 308 or 310 and Main Memory 306. However, with Backing Register File 300 the chances of going into a stall state may be eliminated or at least minimized by using it to temporarily store results, or to hold prefetched values from Main Memory 306 in preparation for the instruction that needs those values. Backing Register File 300 can be used to release execution units and their associated register files as soon as values are written out from Register Files 308 or 310 to Backing Register File 300, and then letting the values in Backing Register File 304 be written to Main Memory 306 using the needed additional clock cycles. This is but one example of how Backing Register File 300 can be used to minimize the time execution units spend being in a stall state, with many more ways of streamlining instruction execution by the use of more registers being readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art and having the benefit of the present disclosure.

In a significant departure from the prior art, the present invention crosses the micro-architecture/macro-architecture boundary. Backing Register Files are visible outside the processor and are expected to be explicitly used by programs at all privilege levels. Backing Register File use by programs can take many forms. The two most common usages will be programs compiled by smart compilers and, for high performance applications, directly by programmers.

As is well known in the art, sequences of instructions constitute one or more instruction stream or streams, where the instruction streams originate from a program or from more than one program. When used in this disclosure, the

5 concept of a program using the Backing Register includes reference to the instruction stream corresponding to the program from which it originates. In addition, when referring to a program using the present invention “program” includes all programs from any source, including user-originated and system-originated, privileged and non-privileged. When discussing a user-visible

10 instructions contained in a user program, the intent is to include any and all instructions originating from any program, where “user” refers to any program using a processor encompassing the present invention. Thus, “user” is from the processor’s view-point where any program uses the processor is a user. This covers the traditional notion of a “user” program which is running on top of

15 (outside of) the operating system, but also includes any other instruction originating from outside the processor – including instructions originating from an operating system or an application-layer program at any level.

Referring now to FIG. 4, a flow diagram shows one way to initialize the

20 use of Backing Register File 300. As a process begins to run, it will send an instruction stream to the processor. The processor will initialize the Backing Register File for use by looking for specific instructions in the instruction stream.

As the instruction flows through the processor, any instructions dealing with the Backing Register File are sent to diamond 400. Diamond 400 checks for the presence of Register Windowing instructions.

5 Register Windowing is a way of using registers that are not in a Register File. Register Windowing is a legacy of Sun Microsystems in its earlier SPARC processors, further technical information being available from Sun Microsystems on its website. Register Windowing does not have the ability of being able to be randomly accessed over the address space. It uses a base address and makes
10 available a small preset number of registers. Its primary use was to pass parameters for subroutine or function calls. Backing Register File 300 can emulate the behavior of Register Windowing, making Backing Register File 300 backwards compatible with Register Windowing technology and the legacy software that still uses it. Register Windowing emulation capability is a bonus
15 feature of processor architectures that use Backing Register File technology, but is not strictly necessary to practice aspects of the inventive features of the present invention. In an implementation without Register Windowing the steps of 400, 406, and 410 would not be used.

20 If Register Windowing instructions are found in the instruction stream coming from a process, Backing Register File 300 will be used, together with supporting microcode, to emulate Register Windowing actions. This is shown in

block 406. It will be set in that mode and used that way for the remainder of the time the current process has control of the processor. As soon as the current process no longer has control of the processor, the method will continue back to diamond 400, ready to process further Backing Register instructions.

5

If no Register Windowing instructions are found, the instruction stream must contain Backing Register File instructions at block 402. This is because there are, basically, only two types of Backing File instructions – one for the Register Windowing capability and one to use the Backing Register File in its native mode. Block 402 is exited to block 408. In block 408 Backing Register File 300 is made fully available to the current process in its native mode. “Native mode” refers to the ability to address each and every register in Backing Register File 300 using its own addresses and at random. When the current process no longer has control of the processor, block 408 is exited and diamond 400 entered, ready to continue processing further Backing Register File instructions.

Referring now to FIG. 5, the process using the processor has sent an instruction making explicit use of Backing Register File 300 and so put the processor in the state shown in step 500 – allowing full access. As the process sends its instruction stream to the processor, each instruction will be checked to see if it is directed to Backing Register File 300 explicitly. If not, step 508 is invoked and the instruction is sent for normal execution. If yes, step 506 is

invoked where the specific action requested in the instruction is either carried out start to finish (e.g., moving a single register value from Backing Register Store 300 to Register File 200) or started (e.g., sending a request for values currently stored in main memory). The instruction determines if it will wait, which puts the execution unit into a stall state if the instruction must wait until its operands arrive. Following step 508, the process begins again at step 502. As will be clear to those of ordinary skill in the art with the benefit of the present disclosure, this illustrative flowchart is not really an endless loop as either the process sending the instruction stream will finish, in which case step 508 is passed but the result of sending the instruction to normal execution terminates the process, or the current process is preempted.

In using Backing Register File 300, a user will issue either some kind of Register Windowing instructions or will request a transfer of register values between register files, main memory, local cache, and Backing Register File 300. This is accomplished using Backing Register File instructions in a program. The data needed to fully accomplish the intended actions will be stored in data structures, and then communicated to the processor using an extended instruction set (Backing Register File instructions recognized in step 504 in FIG. 5).

In the case of the UltraSPARC processor, the standard SPARC instruction set, called SPARC-V9, is documented in *The SPARC Architecture Manual*,

Version 9 and is available from Sun Microsystems. An implementation of the present invention on an UltraSPARC processor would include both the Backing Register File structure disclosed herein and an extended instruction set consisting of instructions that move individual or groups of register values between a backing
5 register file and any register files present, and between a backing register file and main memory. In addition, a set of instructions that emulate Register Windowing would be implemented. The extended instruction set will also have address fields containing enough bits to address the significantly larger address space of a backing register file.

10 In actual implementation, the extension needed for instruction sets such as SPARC-V9 is very manageable. Only a relatively small number of additional instructions would be needed to make full use of the backing register file. The added instructions would typically have only one source and destination address
15 per instruction, as the new instructions will be “move” instructions rather than “operation” instructions. This means the new instructions will be able to be encoded in the pre-existing instruction length. Thus, to make full use of a backing register file as described and disclosed in the present invention requires an extended instruction set that will be able to make use of the pre-existing
20 instruction length, and will implementable with relatively few new instructions. This constitutes a significant functionality gain with relatively little additional

complexity added in the extended instruction set, constituting another significant advantage of the present invention.

An implementation of the present invention on a non-UltraSPARC

5 processor would include both the device as described above and an extended instruction set consisting of instructions that move individual or groups of register values between a backing register file and all implemented register files, and between a backing register file and main memory, but without instructions that emulate Register Windowing. As stated in the last paragraph, the extended
10 instruction set will have address fields containing enough bits to address the significantly larger address space of whatever size backing register file is implemented.

In the case of a new processor the instructions to direct the working of the
15 Backing Register File would be built into the standard instruction set.

FIG. 6a shows one possible data structure for requesting sets of instructions to be sent to a Backing Register File. There are a set of fields of pre-defined type and length plus a header field, organized as a singly linked list. In this case, the
20 addresses of registers to read or write from the Backing Register File to or from Register File 1 are contained in the first linked field, the addresses to read or write from the Backing Register File to or from Register File 2 are contained in the

second linked field, and so on until the registers to read and write from the Backing Register File to or from Register File n are in linked field n . Another data structure implementation is shown in FIG. 6b, where the linked list with explicit pointers is replaced by a set of fields of specified length, such as two
5 bytes, where every n -th field contains addresses of registers to read or write from the Backing Register File to or from Register File n , and where the entire set of fields is contained in one or two words (e.g., 64 bits which is either two 32-bit words or one 64-bit word).

10 As will be readily apparent to a person of ordinary skill in the art and having the benefit of the present disclosure, there will be a large number of possible ways of representing the way in which data will be communicated between the Backing Register File and the Register Files, and between the Backing Register File and Main Memory. All such implementations are
15 contemplated by the present invention, and may be used while staying within the spirit of the disclosure.

The present invention relates to processor architecture at both the micro and macro levels, and further relates to an extended instruction set providing explicit
20 (macro level) use of the inventive aspects of the processor architecture. The present invention also encompasses machine readable media on which are stored embodiments (data structures) of the information to be communicated between the

processor and a process using the Backing Register File. It is contemplated that any media suitable for retrieving instructions is within the scope of the present invention. Examples would include magnetic, optical, or semiconductor media.

5 While embodiments and applications of this invention have been shown and described, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art with the benefit of the present disclosure that many more modifications than mentioned above are possible without departing from the inventive concepts contained herein. The invention, therefore, is not to be restricted except in the spirit of the associated
10 claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A processor comprising:

at least one register file;

at least one execution unit;

said at least one register file operatively connected to said at least one execution unit; and,

a backing register file operatively coupled to said at least one register file, and where said backing register file is operationally and responsively coupled to at least one user-visible instruction.

2. A processor as in claim 1 further comprising a plurality of register

files and further comprising at least one execution unit operably connected to each register file of said plurality of register files, and where said backing register file is

operably connected to each of said plurality of register files providing thereby the ability to transfer values from any designated location in any designated register file of said plurality of register files to any designated location in said backing register file, and from any designated location in said backing register file to any designated location in any designated register file of said plurality of register files.

3. A processor as in claim 1 further comprising a connection circuit

having a first connection and a second connection, where said first connection is

operably connected to said backing register file and said second connection is operably connected to a main memory.

4. A processor as in claim 2 further comprising a connection circuit
5 having a first connection and a second connection, where said first connection is operably connected to said backing register file and said second connection is operably connected to a main memory.

5. A method for moving values from designated locations in designated
10 register files to designated locations in a backing register file and values in designated locations in said backing register file to designated locations in designated register files comprising:

(a) identifying a backing register file instruction in a sequence of instructions;

15 (b) decoding said backing register file instruction, making available addresses for specified numbers of locations in specified register files and an equal number of addresses for specified locations in said backing register file, where said number of addresses is at least one, if said backing file instruction is one of load-backing-register-file or load-register-file;

20 (c) reading values from each of said addresses in said specified register file and writing said values to said equal number of addresses in said backing register

file as specified by said backing register file instruction, if said backing register file instruction is of type load-backing-register-file; and,

(c) reading values from each of said addresses specified in said backing register file and writing said values to said equal number of addresses in said specified register file, if said backing register file instruction is of type load-register-file.

6. A method for moving values from designated locations in main memory to designated locations in a backing register file and values in designated locations in said backing register file to designated locations in main memory comprising:

(a) identifying a backing register file instruction in a sequence of instructions;

(b) decoding said backing register file instruction, making available addresses for specified numbers of locations in main memory and an equal number of addresses for specified locations in said backing register file, where said specified number of locations is at least one, if said backing register file instruction is one of load-main-memory or load-register-backing-file;

(c) reading values from each of said addresses in said main memory and writing said values to said equal number of addresses in said backing register file as specified by said backing register file instruction, if said backing register file instruction is of type load-backing-register-file; and,

(c) reading values from each of said addresses specified in said backing register file and writing said values to said equal number of addresses in said main memory as specified by said backing file instruction, if said backing register file instruction is of type load-backing-register-file.

5

7. A machine readable medium containing a data structure having a backing register file instruction therein.

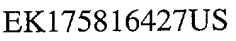
8. A machine readable medium containing a data structure as in claim 7
10 further comprising a backing register file instruction for transferring register values between a register file and said backing register file.

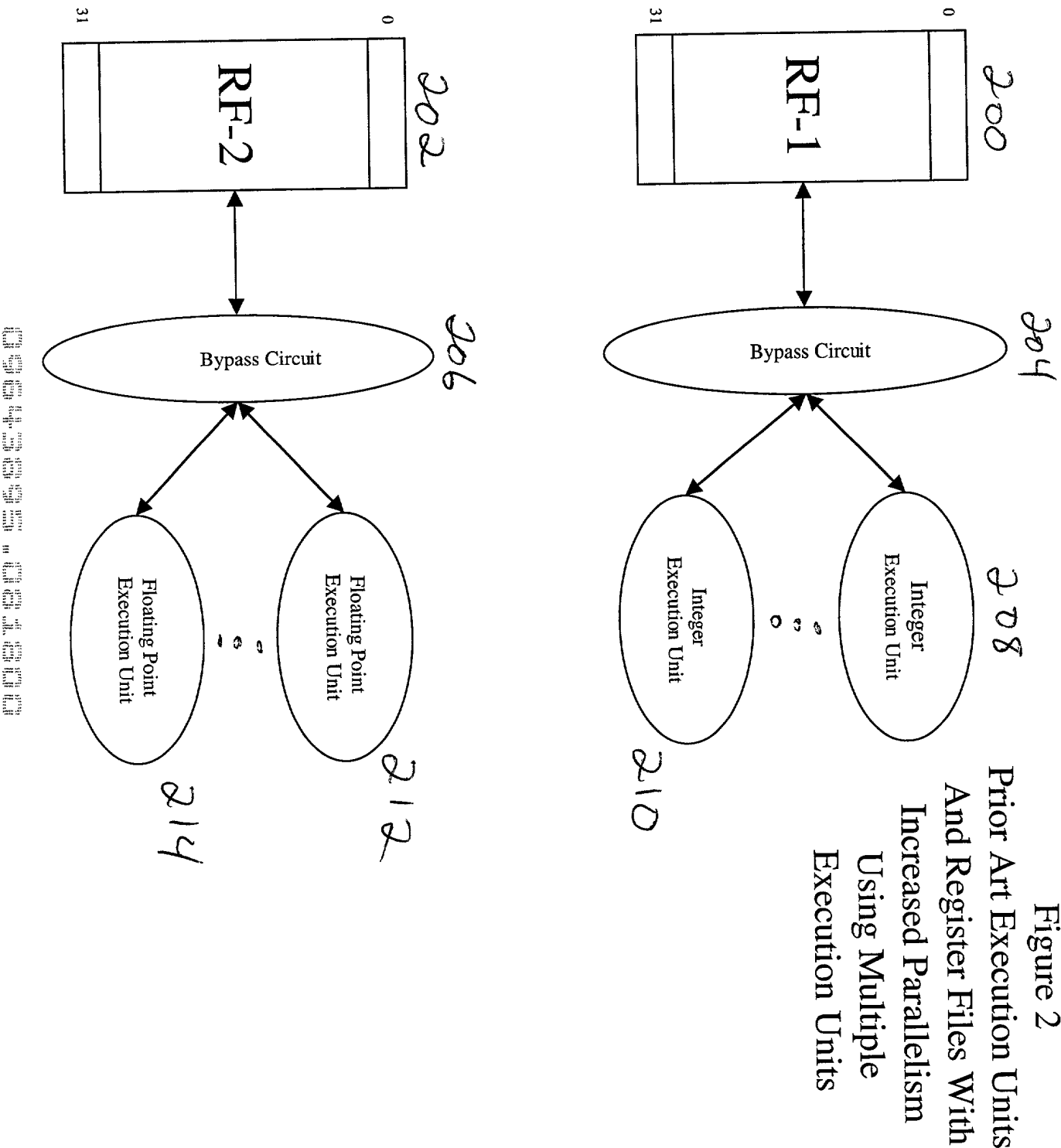
9. A machine readable medium containing a data structure as in claim 7
further comprising a backing register file instruction for transferring values
15 between main memory and said backing register file.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A processor comprising a new architectural feature called a Backing Register File,
where a Backing Register File is a set of randomly accessible registers capable of
holding values, and further are directly connected to the processor's register files.
The processor's register files are in turn connected to the processor's execution
units. A Backing Register File is visible and controllable by users, allowing them
10 to make use of a larger local address space increasing execution unit throughput
thereby, while not changing the size of the register files themselves.

1007





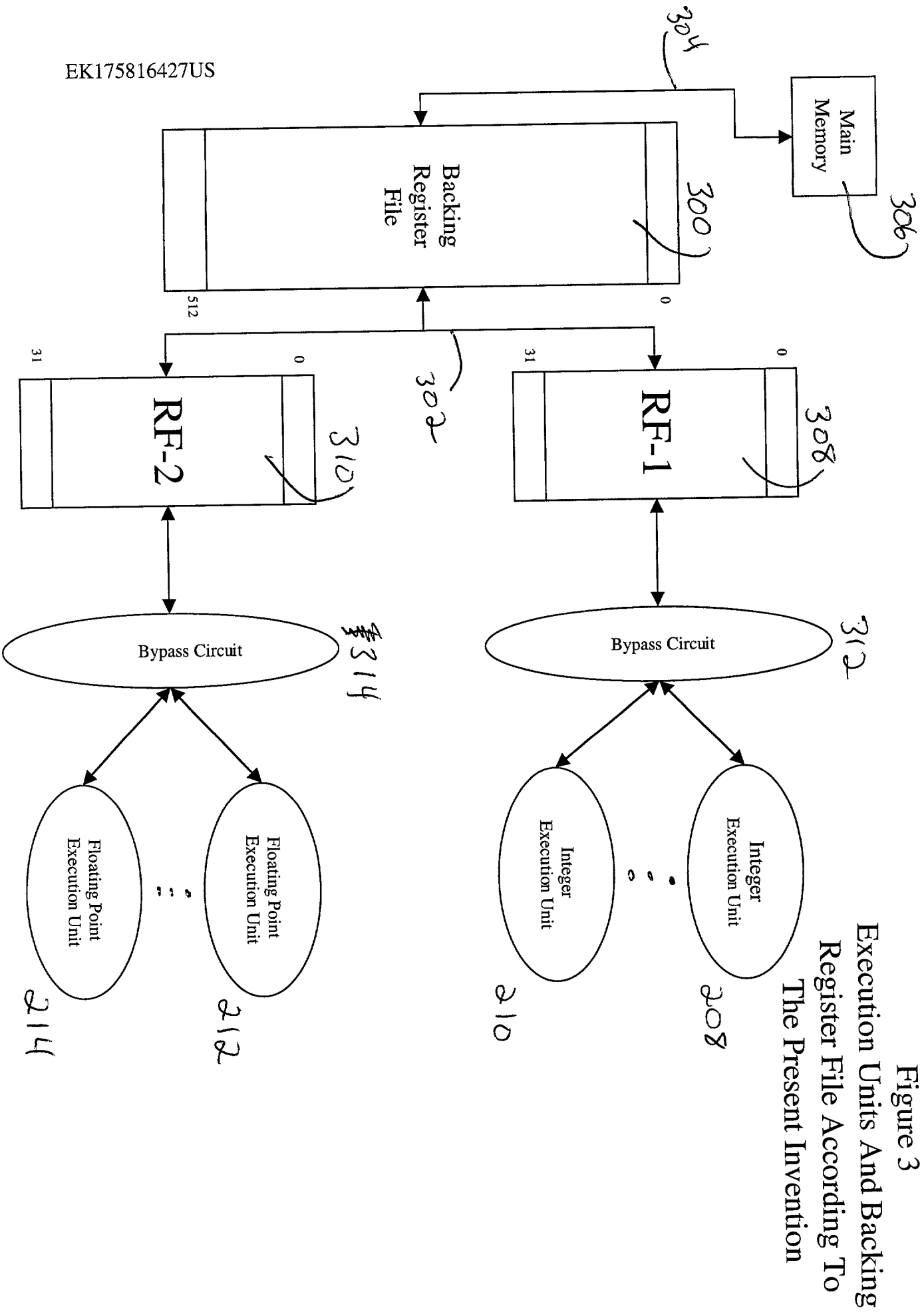


FIG. 3 is a block diagram of the execution units and backing register file according to the present invention.

Figure 4
Flowchart Example Of Initializing
The Present Invention

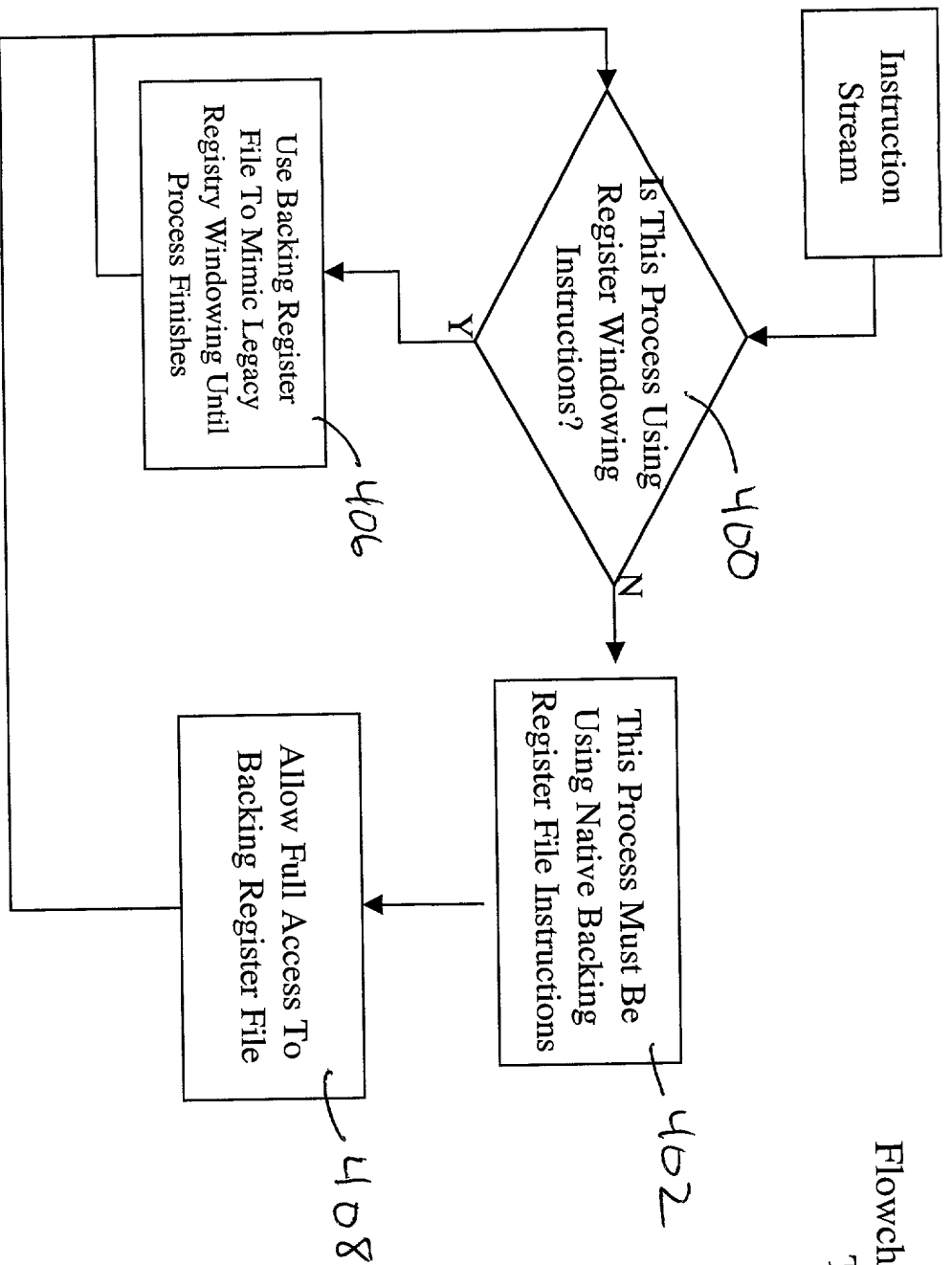


Figure 5
Flowchart Showing Use Of The
Backing Register File

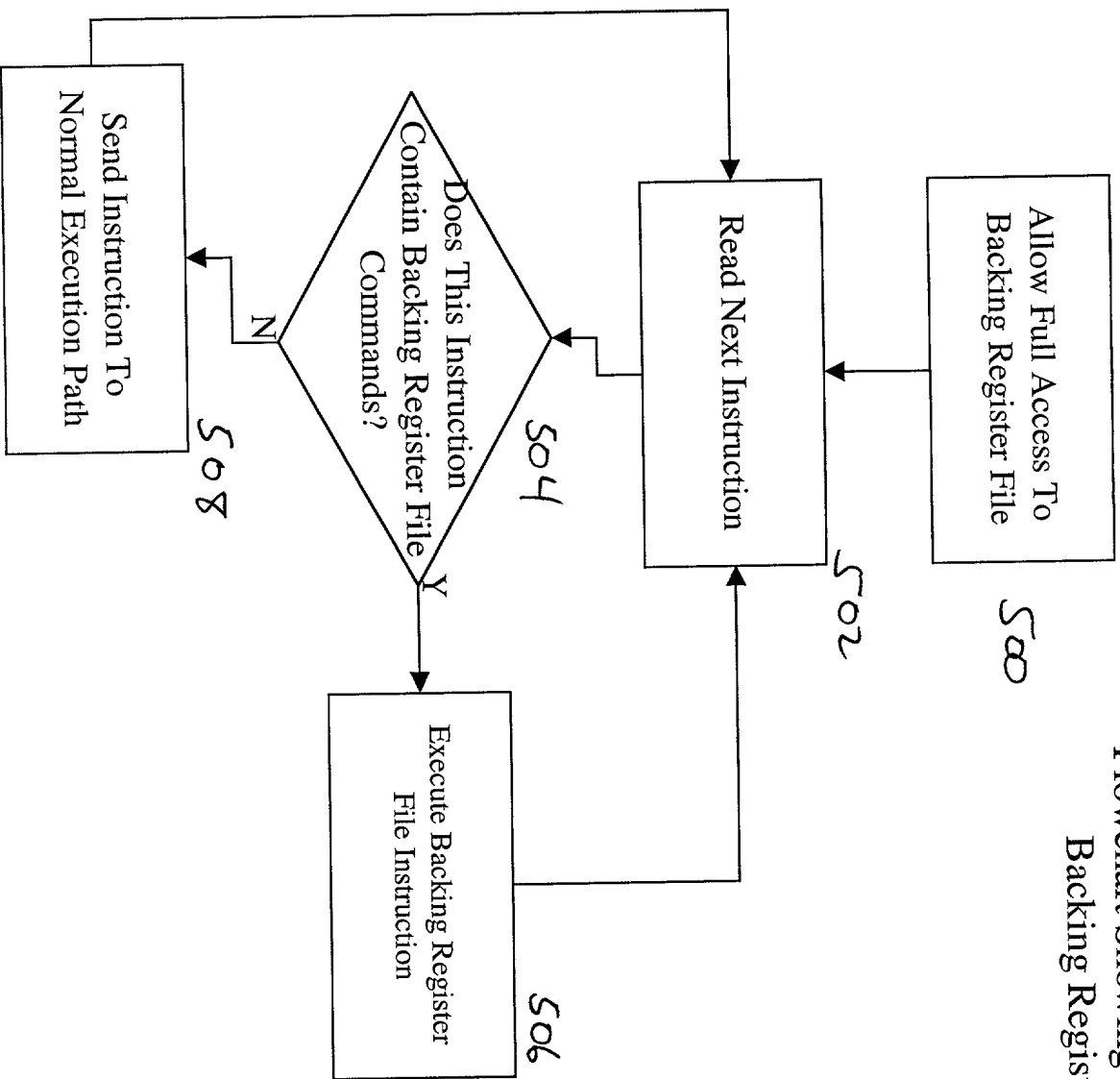


Figure 6a
Data Organization: Singly Linked List

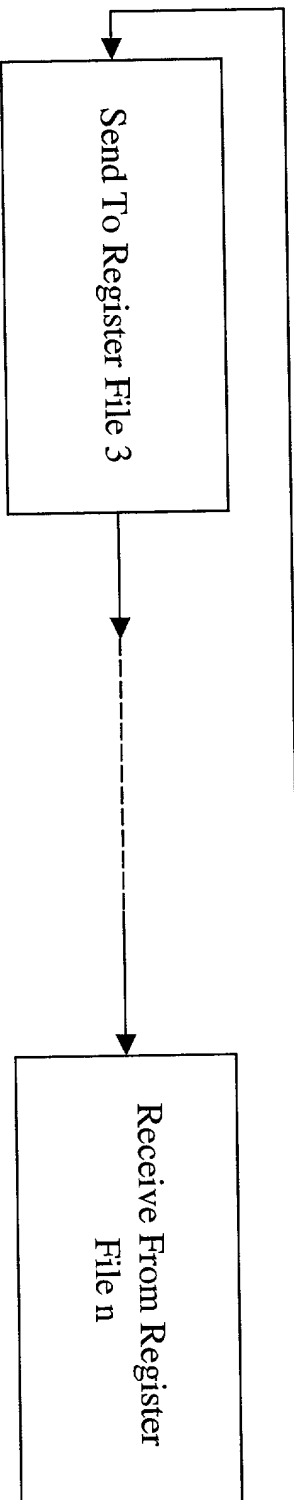
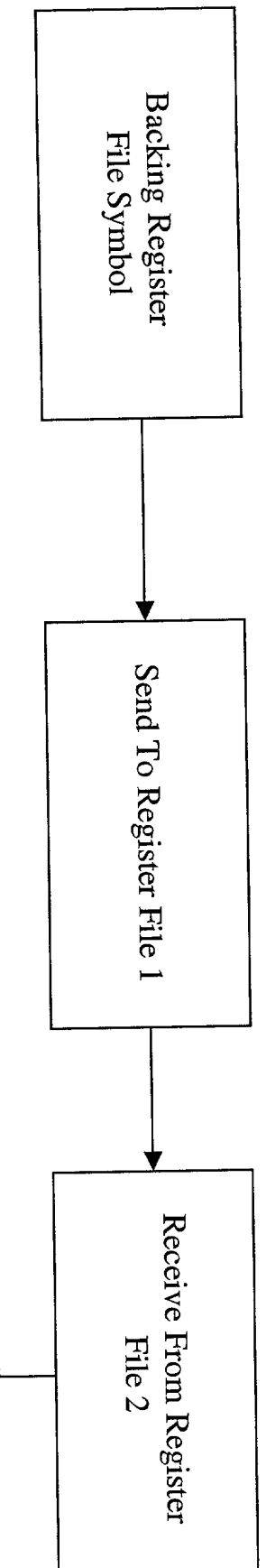
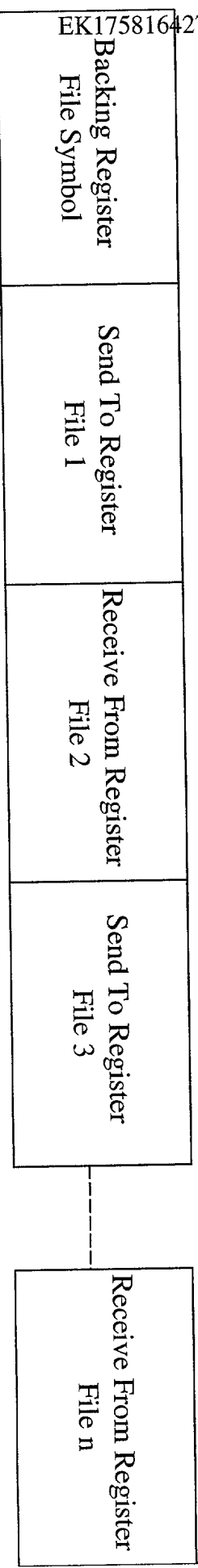


Figure 6b
Data Organization: Byte Stream



DECLARATION

As a below-named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My correct residence, post office address and citizenship are stated below next to my name.

I believe myself to be the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original and first joint inventor (if more than one name is listed below) of the subject matter which is disclosed and claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

“EXPLICIT HIERARCHICAL REGISTER FILE FOR PROCESSORS”

The specification of this subject matter:

- ☒ is attached hereto.
- ☐ was filed on, 2000;
- ☐ was assigned serial No. ;
- ☐ which was amended on _____.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above identified patent application, including the claims, as amended by any amendment(s) referred to above. I believe the subject matter claimed in the above-identified application to be new and to be unobvious to persons of ordinary skill in the art in view of the prior art of which I am aware. I further hereby state that the specification of the above identified patent application adequately describes how to make and use the claimed invention, and further that it sets forth the best mode for practicing the invention known to me as of the date that the application was filed. I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to the examination of this application in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.56(a).

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under 35 U.S.C. §119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application on which priority is claimed.

Application No.	Country	Filing Date	Priority Claimed
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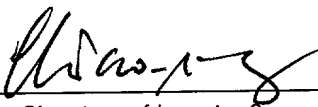
I hereby claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. §120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in these prior United States application(s) in the manner provided by 35 U.S.C. §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose material information as defined in 37 C.F.R. §1.56(a) which occurred between the filing date of the prior application(s) and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

Application No.	Filing Date	Status (Issued, Pending, Abandoned)
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I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made upon information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issuing thereon.

	8/14/00		8/14/00
Signature of Inventor 1	Date	Signature of Inventor 2	Date